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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

REPORT OF

THE BUREAU FOR THE BLIND

For The Fiscal Year

July 1, 1952 to June 30, 1953

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To the

STATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE

1952/53

Edward P. Reidy, Director
Department of Social Welfare
40 Fountain Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Mr. Reidy:

I beg to submit herewith the annual report of the Bureau for the Blind for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1952 and ending June 30, 1953. Thank you for all you and Mr. Clement J. Doyle, Assistant Director, Community Services, have done to assist us in serving the blind.

Respectfully yours,

Leonore Y. Gay

(Mrs.) Leonore Y. Gay
Administrator

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State of Rhode Island

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Edward P. Reidy, Director

Clement J. Doyle, Assistant Director

BUREAU FOR THE BLIND

Staff as of June 30, 1953

Leonore Y. Gay	Administrator
Henrietta G. Borge	Case Work Supervisor
Vacancy	Consultant, Medical Social Work
Bertha M. Mitchell	Senior Social Worker
Vacancy	Senior Social Worker
*Mary J. Cherlin	Home Teacher
Ethel M. Wallace	Guide to Home Teacher
*Evelyn M. Crossman	Home Teacher
Irene B. Therault	Guide to Home Teacher
Gurlie A. Kallstrom	Stock Clerk
Charles W. Donahue	Truck Driver (part time)
Cora G. Carr	Acting Chief of Rehabilitation
Charles M. Gaffney	Rehabilitation Counselor
Vacancy	Senior Vending Stand Supervisor
Benjamin S. Boss	Vending Stand Supervisor
Olive G. Norton	Administrative Assistant
Margaret M. McIntyre	Junior Accountant
Rita M. Casteel	Account Clerk
Arlene Gumbiner	Senior Clerk-Stenographer
Adrienne Kazarian	Senior Clerk-Stenographer
Mary Boyajian	Clerk-Stenographer
Raymond F. Hacking, M. D.	Consulting Ophthalmologist
P. Joseph Pesare, M. D.	Medical Consultant

Advisory Council
(Appointed by the Governor)

Raymond F. Hacking, M. D., Chairman	Serves until March 1, 1957
Vacancy	Serves until March 1, 1956
*William E. Powers	Serves until March 1, 1955
Mrs. Edward J. Burrell	Serves until March 1, 1954
Mrs. Lytton W. Doolittle, Secretary	Serves until March 1, 1958

*Blind

"In terms of ophthalmic measurement central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance of no greater than 20 degrees."

The Bureau also serves a small number of cases who are severely handicapped visually, but not blind, in order to help them to conserve or improve remaining vision.

NUMBER OF BLIND AND NEAR BLIND ON REGISTER

Number registered 7/1/52	1164*
Number added during year (146 new, 5 re-opened)	151
Total on register during the year	1315
Number removed from register	- 211
Number on register at end of year	1104**

*124 of these were near blind
**108 of these were near blind, open for sight conservation purposes

The register of blind and near blind showed a net decrease of 60 during the year.

AGE OF THE BLIND

The blind on the register at the end of the year are classified by broad age groupings in the table below:

Age	Number	Percentage
Birth through 19	110	10.
20 - 49	287	26.
50 - 69	321	29.
70 and over	371	33.6
Age unknown	15	1.4
Total	1104	100.0

These figures confirm the well known fact that the incidence of blindness is proportionately greater in the older population. 33.6% of the blind on the register were 70 years of age or over.

CHANGES IN REGISTER DURING THE YEAR

New Cases

Age	Number	Percentage
Birth - 19	22	14.6
20 - 49	21	13.9
50 and over	99	65.5
Age unknown	9	6.0
Total	151	100.0

New cases reside in 18 cities and towns of Rhode Island. Six new referrals were children under five years of age, 2 of whom were blinded by retrolental fibroplasia, 3 through other congenital causes, and 1 through a cerebral retinal degeneration. It has been 14 years since a Rhode Island child has been blinded congenitally through ophthalmia neonatorum or spyhilis. Ninety-nine of all those registered this year were over 50 years of age. Intake was higher this year because of new cases at the State Institutions.

Closures

Of the 211 cases closed, 82 died, 19 moved out of state, 16 were found not blind and not in need of service, 87 were closed for lack of evidence of blindness or because they had been unlocated for several years, and 7 were closed because sight had been restored through medical treatment!

WHEREABOUTS OF THE BLIND

Adults

The large majority of blind adults live with sighted members of their own families in 36 of the 39 cities and towns of Rhode Island. A few live alone in rooming houses and are able to perform their own household tasks surprisingly well. A few are in private convalescent homes. There were 184 persons receiving Aid to the Blind at the end of the year through the Public Assistance Division. In June the grants amounted to $11,465, the average being $62.31.

20% of blind adults are now in institutions, hospitals, or convalescent homes, because they are senile or in need of prolonged medical care for reasons other than blindness. Such persons are found in institutions designed to give the type of care needed, whether or not the individual can see. When such care is no longer necessary, the blind person returns home or is re-established in the community just as sighted people are, but in numbers and percentage of the total Register they are increasing with longevity.

The institutions in which blind adults were receiving care at the end of the fiscal year are listed below:

State Infirmary	64*
State Hospital for Mental Diseases	34*
Exeter School	34*
State Sanatorium, Wallum Lake	1*
Soldiers' Home	2*
State Prison	1*
Butler Hospital	1
Private Hospitals and Homes for the Aged (six in number)	11
Private Convalescent Homes	46
	194

*Of the 194 blind adults in institutions and private convalescent homes, 136 were receiving care in institutions operated and maintained by the State Department of Social Welfare, which also supervises the private convalescent homes.

Children

Practically all blind infants and children are cared for at home by their parents, just as sighted children are. In rare instances where broken homes require other arrangements, the Bureau calls upon children's agencies for foster home placement, for blind children also need individual love and care. The Bureau's social service staff give parents helpful suggestions about medical care, pre-school and educational training, and suitable toys.

Rhode Island has no school for the blind and no local schools have "Braille classes". Providence alone has "sight conservation classes" designed for the visually handicapped, but not blind. The State Department of Education provides scholarships whereby blind children of average intelligence traditionally receive their education at Perkins Institution in Watertown, Massachusetts, from kindergarten through senior high school. In spite of its name this is a residential school, not an institution. Children spend all school vacations at home with their parents and usually come home weekends. Twenty Rhode Island children and young adults received education at Perkins during the past year. One girl was sent to the Connecticut School for the Blind, since Perkins had no room for her. Two blind children are attending regular school (new trend). One child of kindergarten age is being served by a visiting teacher and one dropped by Perkins is getting instruction from one of our Home Teachers (blind). Three little children are receiving pre-

school education at the Boston Nursery for Blind Babies, two children are at Pine Harbor, 11 blind children of low mentality are receiving education at Exeter School and seven are at the State Infirmary awaiting transfer to Exeter.

STAFF

At the close of the fiscal year, the Bureau had a staff of 17 full-time and 1 part-time employees to carry out its varied program of services to the blind of the State, 7 being professional people whose training and experience were obtained in three professional fields. This was three below our normal quota and there had been considerable turnover during the year. Our first Case Work Supervisor, who had been with us for over three years, resigned in January to accept a position with a private agency. We were fortunate in being able to appoint a replacement a month later. The Consultant, Medical Social Work, who had been with the Bureau for over twelve years, and a Senior Vending Stand Supervisor, who had been with us for six and one-half years, resigned in April; also an Account Clerk who had been employed for nine years. Only the Account Clerk position was filled by the end of the year, although we plan to fill the other vacancies next year.

The staff as of June 30, 1953, included the Administrator, Case Work Supervisor, a Senior Social Worker (we had been unable to fill the second Senior Social Worker position for lack of funds), two Home Teachers (blind) and their two guides, a Stock Clerk and a part-time Truck Driver; two Rehabilitation Counselors, one of whom acts as Chief of Rehabilitation, a Vending Stand Supervisor and a clerical unit of 6, headed by an Administrative Assistant. For ten weeks we were permitted

an extra Account Clerk because of increased volume of work. There were six "turnovers" on three clerical positions, although stability was maintained in the top positions. We are grateful for the hard work our Administrative Assistant and Junior Accountant did in training the new recruits and at considerable sacrifice and much necessary overtime, keeping the work flowing through in spite of growing volume and new assignments. We are also grateful to the Vending Stand Supervisor who covered two jobs for several months, also necessitating much overtime.

Thanks to the State's continued generosity in making up for our insufficient Federal Allotment for fiscal 1952-53, the second year of reduced Federal Allotments for Vocational Rehabilitation, it was unnecessary for us to lay off personnel experienced in providing service which is so vital to the blind.

The Federal Government continued to pay 25% of the Administrator's salary, 25% of that of the Consultant, Medical Social Work (until April), the entire salaries of the Acting Chief of Rehabilitation, the second Rehabilitation Counselor, the Senior Vending Stand Supervisor (to April), one Senior Clerk-Stenographer and one Clerk-Stenographer. The State was paying twelve full-time salaries, one part-time, and 75% of the two salaries shared with the Federal Government.

The Case Work Supervisor successfully continued to supervise and coordinate the social case work and home teaching services, and to coordinate those of the Consultant, Medical Social Work, with the "State" program. The Supervisor gave direct service to social problems arising in the case load of the second Senior Social Worker (vacancy). The Supervisor has further strengthened cooperative relationships with the

Rhode Island Association for the Blind through case conferences and through maintaining good procedure in the interchange of materials and finished blind made goods between the Bureau and the Association, which still conducts all retail sales.

Cooperative relationships with other public and private agencies within and without the State have been furthered by the Case Work Supervisor, especially with the children's agencies, with Public Assistance, and since April she has taken over some of the duties of the Consultant, Medical Social Work, consulting with hospitals, clinics, and private ophthalmologists. She attended the three-day Annual Meeting of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness in New York City in March.

With the cooperation of the Westerly Public Assistance staff local Y-Teen volunteers were interested in reading to blind people who needed such service in that area.

Supplementing the work of the staff the Bureau received valued advice and services from the five members of the Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind; also consultation services from our Consulting Ophthalmologist.

YEAR'S WORK

During the year, 590 of the 1315 blind and near blind persons on the Register received individualized service from the staff of the Bureau. This meant that about 45% of those registered received some service during the year: A splendid record from a staff reduced in number. Many of them received several types of services. The Case Work Super-

visor and the Senior Social Worker served 473, the two Home Teachers gave home instruction to 159, and the Rehabilitation Counselors served 181. The Consultant, Medical Social Work gave indirect service to 216 until April. In addition, 64 blind salesmen sold greeting cards purchased through the Blind Industries Rotary Fund. On June 30, 1953, 262 blind persons were enjoying the use of "Talking Book Machines" in their homes. These machines, owned by the U. S. Library of Congress, "read" literature from records available by mail, postage free, from the Regional Library for the Blind at Perkins Institution. The Bureau acts as lending agent for the machines, keeps them repaired and replaces them when necessary.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The watchword remained "Can sight be conserved or restored?" With their consent, adequate eye reports are obtained for all new cases and for a small backlog of old cases, to make sure that no one whose vision could be improved or sustained at the existing level through medical eye treatment, lacks opportunity for treatment through inability to pay. Clients who must remain blind (unfortunately, a large majority) are referred for appropriate services available within the Bureau, and sometimes, with their consent, to other agencies which may be able to assist them with special problems and needs. As the blind grow older the hearing of some begins to fail. The Providence League for the Hard of Hearing has been helpful in determining whether a hearing aid will help and which can give best service to the individual. At our request the American Foundation for the Blind has provided several hearing aids,

and other special equipment. Many agencies have been helpful—too many to list here, although grateful acknowledgements have been made by every professional worker. As usual, the Lions Clubs of the State are ready to help out in large and small ways and have provided white canes, Braille watches, clothing and equipment. Students at Perkins, and the institutionalized blind received considerable attention. Interchange of information between the Rhode Island Association for the Blind and the Bureau insured fairly complete coverage without duplication of effort. The parents of pre-school blind children have sought and received much advice, reassurance and service in preparing them for education and life in a sighted world.

CONSULTANT, MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK

Careful review of all medical reports, including ophthalmological and general medical, and interpretation of their social and vocational implications are fundamental to successful operation of services for the blind. This is true whether the objective is conservation of vision, restoration of sight, treatment to remove or reduce secondary handicaps, or to determine the extent to which remaining vision may be safely and constructively used for educational or vocational purposes. The register of June 30, 1953, shows that 1144 cases have now been coded for medical social purposes, and such data serve as a valuable tool for research.

The Consultant, Medical Social Work, advised other members of the Bureau's professional staff in meeting medical-social problems involved in their direct service to clients in both the State and the Federal-State programs, until her resignation in April. Effective con-

sultation service to the Public Assistance Division through written interpretation of individual ophthalmological reports submitted to the Consultant had to be discontinued when she left, and Public Assistance, as well as our own staff, have missed her skilled advice.

HOME TEACHING

During the past fiscal year 159 clients were served by our two Home Teachers, blind themselves. 41 of these were new pupils. The Teachers gave 1255 individual lessons in homes of the blind throughout the State, made 258 social adjustment visits, and made 33 social and 609 miscellaneous calls. Each Teacher is provided with a State car and a faithful driver-guide.

There are many facets of Home Teaching, including the teaching of reading, and handcrafts, use of cane, Braille and Moon raised print, Braille writing, how to use the writing guide for the purposes of signing personal and business letters, telephone dialing, ironing, cooking, eating gracefully, threading of "self-threading needles", and even helpful hints on shaving.

Contrary to public opinion, it is not always possible or advisable for those losing vision in middle or later life to learn to read or to write Braille, except in limited ways. Sometimes the diseases which may accompany advancing age dim the sense of touch to a point where the effort to read "for fun" destroys the pleasure. Yet, people blinded in their 60's, 70's and 80's have been able to enjoy Braille reading. Some enjoy articles of professional interest obtained through the mail from the Library at Perkins, and many like articles appearing in the "Reader's Digest" and other specially compiled Braille magazines.

The Talking Book machine opens broad vistas to "pupils" whether or not they can read Braille. It is a part of the Home Teacher's work to instruct clients to operate the Talking Book machine and to help with the selection of book titles. Available in record form for the Talking Book are all types of reading matter, ranging from studies of philosophy to the more thrilling, hair-raising murder mysteries. More than one visit may be required to enable a client who has recently lost his vision to operate the Talking Book machine with the feeling of ease.

Those wishing to learn Braille reading and writing usually need to learn only the alphabet and simpler contractions. The housewife frequently wants to label her canned goods and other staples in Braille. When she becomes more proficient in Braille reading and writing (it takes longer to learn to write than to read) this is a task she can perform for herself.

Through observation of what the Teachers are able to do for themselves, blind adults whom they visit are encouraged to keep trying, and gain confidence in themselves and in their social adjustment to blindness. Other members of the family learn to permit the blind person to do more for himself, and independence is precious. On talking with the Home Teachers, parents of blind children begin to realize that lack of sight is more of an inconvenience than a total disability.

Pupils who have been instructed in handcrafts and who reach the point of making saleable articles are referred to the Rhode Island Association for the Blind--the private agency handling all retail sales of articles made by the blind in Rhode Island.

Sometimes the Home Teachers work in cooperation with the Bureau's Rehabilitation service, giving training which may be required as part of a client's Rehabilitation plan.

Relatives and well meaning people tend to smother the blind with too much service. Some, believing the blind have magic powers, give too little. The Teachers recommend: "Do not deny him the pleasure, privilege, and right of doing for himself; offer minimum help intelligently and when necessary. Help him to help himself, as only in this way is his dignity and self-esteem preserved."

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The most difficult problem in work with the blind is to prepare them for and to find them suitable employment. Through this Federal-State program supervised by an Acting Chief, many blind persons have had steady employment for years. It is challenging to know how many want to be independent and happy through employment, including some who are no longer young. It is most discouraging, however, that Federal appropriations for this program, "frozen" for three years, remained "frozen" in another year of inflation and we were unable to hire a third Rehabilitation Counselor to meet the blind clients demand for vocational rehabilitation. In April we lost our Senior Vending Stand Supervisor (100% Federal) and our Consultant, Medical Social Work (25% Federal). It was not possible to fill either position during the balance of the year.

Caseload

141 active cases were carried over from the previous year, plus 6 in referral status. 40 entered the caseload during the year, making a total active caseload of 181, reduced by closures to 149 at

the end of the year. The application of 2 more were under consideration on June 30, 1953.

According to Federal Standards for agencies for the Blind, we should have 3.5 Rehabilitation Counselors, whereas we have 2, including the Acting Chief, much of whose time is devoted to administration and supervision. It is no wonder that clients must wait long periods for service and that complaints occur.

Rehabilitations

The Acting Chief and her one Counselor are to be congratulated upon the year's output: 21 cases were closed employed! This in spite of staff curtailment. The jobs were as follows:

1 assembler-electrical, 1 baker's helper, 1 canvasser, 1 cement block mixer, 1 dishwasher, 1 electrician's helper, 1 elevator operator, 1 general farm hand, 1 greenskeeper-State Park Golf Course, 1 housewife, 1 kitchen helper, 1 lathe operator, 1 material handler, 1 messenger girl-hospital, 1 music therapist-State Mental Hospital, 1 retail manager, 1 sales person (radio and TV), and 4 vending stand (2 operators, 1 helper, 1 cafeteria helper).

15 were men, 6 were women. Their wages per week ranged from $20 to $75, the average being $39.56 for 16. (5 were self-employed and their earnings are not known). Ages at acceptance ranged from 16 to 59, with an average of 34.8; their education from 1 to 16 grades; their previous employment from none to substantial; the months which elapsed between application and closure from 1 to 99, with an average of 25.8. Case service costs for the year ranged from 0 to $962, the average being $138. Total case service costs $2,908. 8 cases were rehabilitated at no cost other than counseling service. 10 had been blind since birth, 3 became so during their first year and the balance became blind at various ages up to 58.

Placement of a music therapist in a position in Indiana required that placement transportation be paid by the Rehabilitation service. This person was promoted to chief music teacher in a large State Mental Hospital and ranked first in the Indiana Civil Service Test.

It may be that our agriculture university graduate in Horticulture, placed as a greenskeeper is in an occupation unusual for a blind person. He ranked first in the Civil Service examination.

Services rendered in the process of vocational guidance and planning included diagnostic general medical and ophthalmological examinations, and other specialists' examinations; providing for medical and psychiatric treatment to render clients more employable, providing glasses, artificial eyes and hearing aids, when clients were unable to pay. Psychological and Aptitude tests were provided. A procedure for health examinations for food handlers was arranged in cooperation with the Business Enterprises Program and some Vending Stand Operators were examined.

Training

During fiscal 1953, 5 blind persons were in vocational training on the college level: 1 in graduate school for teaching sociology and social psychology on a college level; 1 graduated with an A.B. degree as a sociology major, with social work the objective; 1 finished the sophomore year while preparing to be a speech therapist; 1 graduated from junior college in business administration and 1 studied in business college. 3 rehabilitation trainees were Perkins Institution students; 1 of them a post-graduate in music completed requirements for

college admission, 1 blind person graduated from a parochial school, and 1 was a student in a public high school. 1 person was in training as a tutor in remedial reading; 8 others received various types of training.

Blind persons in training were provided with a total of 43 readers for 7 trainees. The rehabilitation service provided 4 blind trainees with tuition (2 in college, 2 in business school), 2 with tutorial training, 2 with training maintenance in college and 7 with training materials of a wide and interesting variety.

Training Supervision

The Acting Chief of Rehabilitation, who is also part-time Counselor, had 103 contacts with 32 training facilities regarding 31 clients besides contacts with some readers of the 43 in service.

The full-time Counselor gave 120 hours to homework mechanics and experiments and carried on two homework projects (one seasonal).

Civil Service Examinations Monitored for Blind
State of Rhode Island

1 Clerk-Stenographer
1 Greenskeeper (first on list and placed at State Park)
2 Switchboard Operators (1 first on list)

Staff Service

The Acting Chief and part-time Counselor had 471 client interviews with 66 clients, 238 staff conferences regarding 118 clients, 60 supervisory conferences regarding 123 clients, 57 contacts with employers and 145 contacts with 55 community agencies regarding 55 clients.

The full-time Counselor had 264 client interviews with 115 clients, 58 contacts with related agencies, 71 employer contacts, and 35 employment service contacts.

Staff Training

A Workshop conducted by the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which distributes directives and much professional literature, was attended from 4/27-5/1/53 by the Acting Chief of Rehabilitation, who supervises the full-time Counselor. A Workshop conducted in Newark, New Jersey from 2/2/53-2/6/53 was attended by the full-time Counselor.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

VENDING STANDS

Several prospective locations were studied in the course of the year, with one resulting in the establishment of a Vending Stand.

"The Little Red Cart" located on the Court Street Bridge in Woonsocket, was purchased by the Bureau for the Blind and opened for business on February 2, 1953 - our sixteenth Vending Stand. A rehabilitation client who had been trained at the Court House Training Stand and who had assisted at the WPRO Cafeteria for several months, was placed on the newly purchased Stand as Operator. He has since been closed as rehabilitated under general supervision of the program.

Other locations given consideration during the year hold possibilities for future development.

One young man, only partially trained for vending stand operation left the Program to open a little store of his own. In spite of his valiant efforts and considerable service from the Bureau, it seemed doubtful that this business could survive as the end of the year approached.

Equipment Improvements Made At Vending Stands Were:

VENDING STAND #8: A new cigar case was purchased and a new Coca-Cola Cooler replaced an older model.

VENDING STAND #12: A new electric coffee urn was installed.

VENDING STAND #15: A new Coca-Cola Cooler replaced an older model and a coin operated coffee vending machine was installed in the lobby, adjacent to the stand, profits from which are credited to Vending Stand #15.

Vending Stand #15 in the Old Industrial Trust Building started operation on March 3, 1952, in a partially tenanted building. This is the only Vending Stand location for which we are required to pay rent. Throughout the fiscal year 1952-53, this stand was operated as a Training Stand.

We encountered considerable trouble with pilferage at Stand #15 over a period of time. However, steps were taken to eliminate the possibility of the continuance of the pilferage and at the end of the year, it was felt that the location had potentialities, could overcome the difficulties, and could become a successful stand.

5 "trainees" (3 men and 2 women) received instruction at our two Training Stands during the year.

Gross business of the 13 active stands for fiscal year 1952-53 increased from $173,348 last year to $186,576, #16 having been in operation for only 5 months by June 30th.

Profits to 11 regular operators increased from $24,462 last year to $26,169. Trainees were paid $2,558.50 at Vending Stands #8 and #15.

Blind substitutes during the year were paid a total of $217 and sighted substitute help received $57.

Agency fees deposited to the "Business Enterprises Blind" Restricted Receipts Account amounted to $4,959.88.

During the year a system was established by our accounting unit and the Department of Internal Revenue whereby income tax payments and withholding tax deductions are reported and paid through this office for all Operators who are now considered "self-employed", and who must keep a record of wages to substitutes, deduct a percentage of their earnings, and must also make a contribution as "employer". We are delighted that the Vending Stand Operators are now covered by Social Security, but additional accounting help is essential, and overdue! Some Vending Stand Operators were enrolled in the Physicians Service as well as the Blue Cross Group Plan during the year.

The Senior Vending Stand Supervisor terminated May 2, 1953. He had been on Annual Leave throughout the month of March, had worked but a few days during the month of April, and had had considerable sick leave.

The Vending Stand Supervisor carried an especially heavy work load throughout the year and was required to put in an excessive amount of overtime. He carried the responsibility of both jobs (Senior Vending Stand Supervisor and Vending Stand Supervisor) from the first of March until a new Senior Vending Stand Supervisor could be appointed, (which was not until September of the next fiscal year).

The number of Vending Stands has increased from year to year, as well as total volume of business. At the close of the fiscal year, 13 were in operation including one cafeteria.

The increased number of Stands, plus the additional work-load resulting from Federal Social Security law amendments and income tax procedure, placed added burdens on our clerical and accounting staff, which had remained constant in number for many years, and which is now heavily overburdened.

For this reason, the Administrator requested in January that the State Department of Administration make a survey of the situation with the hope that an additional Account Clerk might be permitted, and that the Junior Accountant might be re-classified to a higher bracket. Such a survey was made intermittently from February 24th to March 26th, but no conclusions had been reached by the end of the fiscal year. The clerical staff had to put in many hours of overtime, in order to keep work reasonably current.

Greeting Cards

During the year 64 blind salespersons sold greeting cards at a gross profit to themselves of $4,138.54. This is an average of $64.66 per person. However, some individuals sold more and some sold less, and profits ranged from $955.96 for one individual to a low of 50 cents for another.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind met on January 13, 1953 in the office of the Director of Social Welfare. Four of the five members attended as well as the Director, Assistant Director, Administrator, and Administrative Assistant. The discussion centered upon whether the Bureau should seek legislation making the

reporting of blindness mandatory, as it is in several states. The Administrator reviewed recent correspondence with Dr. Ralph G. Hurlin, Secretary and Treasurer of the Russell Sage Foundation, regarding the Rhode Island Register of the Blind for the year ending June 30, 1952. Dr. Hurlin, an expert in statistics on blindness, felt that our Register was deficient in the upper age groups (those over 65). Of course, the Bureau wishes to offer its services to all who may benefit from them.

A letter was addressed to the President of the Rhode Island Ophthalmological Society asking the opinion of the group as to the advisability of such legislation. Sufficient copies of the latest Annual Report were delivered to the place of meeting so that each member might have one for reference. The Secretary later replied that after considerable discussion it was voted that the Society did not recommend such legislation, but that they should and would continue to refer cases individually. Therefore no such legislation was introduced during the 1952 session of the Legislature.

It was reported by the parents of blind children attending Perkins through scholarships which are provided by the State Department of Education, that they found it a hardship in time and money to make the round-trip of nearly 100 miles to bring their children home late Friday afternoons and to return them to Watertown Sunday nights as recommended by Perkins. Dr. Michael F. Walsh, Commissioner of Education, discussed the problem with them at an evening meeting in November, but no solution was found during the year. Dr. Mary T. Thorp, Director of Henry Barnard School, addressed the group in February at their invitation.

A far more serious educational problem is imminent--although so far its impact has been felt more as a slowly rising tide than as the tidal wave which is surely on its way. "Retrolental Fibroplasia" is causing much blindness throughout the country among children born prematurely weighing less than 4 pounds at birth, and educational facilities for blind children, locally confined to residential schools, will be unable to cope with the increased demand for admission--even as early as the fall of 1954!

It is recognized by the State Department of Education that local teachers should be trained to teach Braille reading and writing, typing, and how to employ special tools and devices useful to the blind, so that they may more readily adjust to instruction in "sighted" classes in the public and parochial schools.

Joint meetings held periodically with the Rhode Island Association for the Blind have further strengthened the spirit of cooperation between the public and private agencies, and case conferences have brought about better service to blind clients.

The Rhode Island Federation for the Blind continued with its popular recreational program and the Administrator attended their outing at Rocky Point in August. The committee to study the advisability of pensions for the blind was not extended into 1954 by the Legislature.

A cooperative agreement with the Rhode Island State Employment Service was signed during the year, and their staff has been most helpful about sharing their knowledge of suitable job opportunities with our Rehabilitation Unit.

The Administrator is a member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Rehabilitation and Employment of Handicapped Persons, and joins forces with representatives of the Employment Service and of public and private agencies active in many special programs within this general field, throughout the year. All collaborate to bring the special attention of employers and the general public to "Hire the Physically Handicapped Week". This "Week" is proclaimed every year by the President's Committee of the same name for early in October, and awards are given to stimulate interest in the program.

The Bureau has benefited through field service from Vlad F. Ratay, Regional Representative of the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and from Miss Celia L. Carpenter, Regional Representative of the Division of State Merit Systems, services now available through the recently created Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

In line with Federal policy we are pleased to report that P. Joseph Pesare, M. D., Medical Director for the Division of Public Assistance, agreed to act as Medical Consultant for the Bureau for the Blind as of August 26, 1952.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation scheduled its first Administrative Conference for heads of all State-wide Vocational Rehabilitation programs (general and blind) in Regions I and II, in New York City for the week ending December 12th. Discussions of problems of administration common to all were spirited, and many able Consultants gave stimulation to the group of about 40.

The Administrator attended the National Rehabilitation Association's Annual Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, in October,

completing her second year term as one of two representatives of agencies for the blind in the States' Council. She also attended the full States' Vocational Rehabilitation Council meeting in Washington in April; and a meeting of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, of which she is now Secretary-Treasurer.

The Administrator and the Rehabilitation Counselor attended the two-day New England Regional Conference of the National Rehabilitation Association, newly named the Yankee Region, at Portland, Maine, in June. Miss Mary E. Switzer, Director of the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation warned us that some members of Congress were in favor of amending Federal Law 113, asking the States to appropriate a much higher proportion of State Funds in order to obtain Federal Allotments for the year ending June 30, 1955. Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, had convinced President Eisenhower that the program was a constructive one and deserved an adequate appropriation, and the National Rehabilitation Association was bringing all possible pressure to continue the present 80% Federal-20% State Proportions, and to obtain adequate appropriation for the program. All States were urged to inform their Congressmen of the dangers inherent in the present situation. The two vocational rehabilitation agencies in Rhode Island were grateful when the Chairman of the Occupational Adjustment Committee of the Community Workshops sent wires to Rhode Island's Congressmen on behalf of the program.

Home Teachers attended a rare two-day conference on the Deaf-Blind at Perkins Institution in April and found it most interesting and informative.

The Lions Clubs of Rhode Island District continued to show interest in their blind neighbors by supplying white canes, Braille watches, and clothing at our request. Two volunteers who had learned Braille transcribed special study material for Rehabilitation clients.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In September the Journal-Bulletin published a news item and picture when one of the Vending Stand Operators became the 300,000th member of the Physicians' Service Plan. In February the Evening Bulletin featured the Administrator's 15th Anniversary as head of the Bureau for the Blind with a story and pictures on the Women's Page. Feature stories regarding clients included placement of our Musical Occupational Therapist in an Indiana Hospital, two college students, and one teen-age Perkins student made the Sunday "Rhode Islander".

There were two radio broadcasts: One by the Rehabilitation Counselor during "N.E.P.H. Week" and one in which the Chief of Rehabilitation and the Supervisor of Guidance and Placement of the Providence Public Schools re-enacted a joint counseling interview with one of our able and talented Rehabilitation clients.

Speaking engagements at which our films were shown were fulfilled by the Acting Chief of Rehabilitation for the Fair Club in October; by the Administrator for the Industrial Safety Association in May, and the Roger Williams Hospital Nurses-in-Training in June. In February the Administrator was a discussant at the First Regional Meeting of Sheltered Workshops, held in Providence. In March she was one of a panel who outlined community services available for the handicapped, to the Instructors of Nurses of the Roger Williams Hospital. Our Senior Social Worker informed the Lincoln School

P. T. A. of Riverside about the Bureau's Program on June 1, 1953 and showed educational films.

COSTS

The cost of operating the Bureau for the Blind for the fiscal year was $82,147.84. Of this amount, $24,587.76 was spent from Federal Funds for vocational rehabilitation of the blind.

NEEDS FOR BETTER SERVICE TO THE BLIND

1. An additional Rehabilitation Counselor is badly needed so that blind clients who are now waiting for vocational rehabilitation service may receive the concentrated attention necessary to prepare them for and to assist them in obtaining suitable employment. We hope that better understanding of this constructive program by Congress will result in more adequate Federal appropriations, making this possible.

2. The Acting Chief of Rehabilitation's position should be reclassified from that of "Rehabilitation Counselor" to "Supervisor of Vocational Rehabilitation" in recognition of the growing leadership and the resourcefulness she has shown over a nine-year period.

3. The "Junior Accountant's" position should be reclassified to "Semi-Senior Accountant" since the complex and difficult accounting tasks which arise in our varied program are determined to be at that level.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

Throughout the year there has been close cooperation between the State Departments of Education and Welfare in planning for the

educational needs of many "exceptional children". The Bureau for the Blind has worked closely with Dr. Michael F. Walsh, Commissioner of Education, upon whose shoulders this responsibility rests, and with Mary F. McGeough, Supervisor of Special Education of Handicapped Children, in connection with needs of the visually handicapped.

1. Blind Children: "Retrolental-Fibroplasia" continues to cause much blindness among prematurely born children who weigh less than 4 pounds at birth, and blind children need in addition to special understanding, special tools and special instructions in the use of the strange medium of Braille. Since blind children, still relatively few in number compared to other "exceptional children", have traditionally been sent to Perkins Institution for education, most teachers in public and parochial schools have had less experience in teaching them, than in teaching those handicapped in other ways.

Perkins foresees that from September 1954 on, that Institution cannot continue to meet all of the demands of five New England States, where the Rhode Island State Department of Education has paid scholarships for education of Rhode Island blind children for over a century. (Connecticut has its own school).

A new and better era is dawning for all exceptional children, but it may take longer to train teachers of the blind than to train teachers of children with other handicaps.

We are encouraged to learn that the State Department of Education is hoping to arrange for special instructions for a few teachers of the blind, and that within some "areas" within the State, these teachers will in turn provide the special instruction needed,

within a reasonable distance from home. Perkins Institution stands ready to assist with this training.

We understand that this plan cannot be initiated over night, but feel that much will be gained in the long run when most blind children can obtain their education within their own communities. When they reach employable age many of them will be able to make that adjustment more readily, for their abilities will be known and respected.

2. Visually Handicapped--Not Blind: In Rhode Island, Providence is the only community which has ever established "Sight Conservation" classes. Thanks to better medical care and more complete medical coverage, fewer and fewer children have needed such specialized care. Some local schools have purchased "sight-saving" equipment for an occasional pupil who needs it. The Bureau for the Blind calls attention to the needs of children known to us who may need such equipment. The trend is down, but consultation service for the partially seeing child is still available at the Bureau.

"Visually handicapped pupils can function in regular classes, provided supervisors of special education acquainted with their problems are available to give consultation service to local school departments, and provided money is available for special equipment and paid readers, as needed. In fact there is an advantage in placing visually handicapped children in classes suited to their mental ability rather than in grouping them purely on the basis of a common handicap." (This is a quotation from our Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951, and it is still true.)

3. Visiting teachers in the public school systems rarely give service to home bound children or to those confined to hospitals.

Home bound or hospitalized blind children should be taught Braille as well as elementary subjects by certified visiting teachers who have specialized training.

4. There are now 12 pre-school children in Rhode Island (infants through six years) who are visually handicapped, none of whom have had any educational opportunity on a pre-school or kindergarten level. Some of these children need such preliminary training for a later successful school adjustment. The State Department of Education has been most cooperative about paying the training costs for a few children who urgently needed such training, whose parents are unable to pay for it.

5. There are also fifteen children of school age for whom no satisfactory educational plan has yet been found. Many of these children have more than one handicap.

NEED FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. There is need for further public education in the areas of sight conservation and prevention of blindness.

2. All blindness and all eye conditions offering a serious threat of blindness should be reported to the Bureau for the Blind. Since no other agency is now equipped to serve persons below the age of sixteen, whose vision is above the blind level but who have serious visual handicaps, sometimes progressive, it may be advisable for the Bureau to extend its services to this group.

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